

Audio-Visual Aids Replacing Tools Of Yesterday in Nation's Schools

New York—The American teacher until recently was the only professional person required to work with yesterday's tools — books, blackboard, chalk.

The implement armament now is catching up with the communications' revolution of the last 50 years.

Educators call the academic additions audio-visual aids — films, language laboratories, closed-circuit and broadcast television, slides and teaching machines, for example.

The electronics additions are meant to give Junior and Junior the best chance to learn the most — and most efficiently.

A report in "The Nation's Schools," a journal for school administrators, hails the swing to audio-visuals — and bids it full steam.

Held Non-Essential

Don White, executive vice president of the national audio-visual association, one of the experts reporting on the "revolution," recalled five years ago at the White House conference on education such tools were regarded as non-essentials... in the same class as swimming pools.

"The next decade," he said, "will see more materials of

every type more readily available and on every subject in the curriculum.

"Equipment will be simpler to operate, easier to transport, and designed for easier maintenance. New items of equipment, some not yet conceived, some now on the drawing boards, will become reality."

White said ten years ago, educational TV was little

more than a dream in the minds of forward-looking educators. Now it is an everyday teaching tool.

And only three years ago, you could count on the fingers of one hand the language laboratories in secondary schools.

Now a whole new way of teaching languages has been developed by language teachers, in cooperation with equip-

ment manufacturers. Thousands of language laboratories now are in use, with thousands more on the way.

Tremendous Value
White said the teaching machine — a kind of tutorial robot — is a tool of tremendous value.

But he cautioned that teaching machine manufacturers and experts are urging that adequate time be allowed for

an experimental period before teaching machines are rushed into production.

In theory, any subject that can be verbalized can be programmed for a teaching machine. Right now such subjects as mathematics and the sciences are more easily programmed since they must be taught in a readily identified sequence.

"To some extent," White

said, "language laboratories suffered from being rushed into volume production, and sales were made before manufacturers were completely ready with finished and tested designs. This same thing can happen to teaching machines — but its effects can be worse."

Other tools in the teacher's audio-visual stockpile:

— The opaque projector

directly projects anything from a postage stamp to a magazine page. More than 90 per cent of all printed or written materials can be projected by means of this device. It's used in a room with subdued lighting so students can take notes.

Large Transparencies

— Overhead projectors show large transparencies and can be operated by the

teacher at the front of the room. Thus, the visual and oral elements of a lesson can be correlated.

— Filmstrip projectors with sound track present an audio-visual program with the push of a button.

— Magnetic sound projectors make it possible for the teacher to produce his own motion pictures or to add a special sound track to tailor

a particular film to special needs.

There's only one hitch to the audio-visual tidal wave sweeping on the nation's schools. Few of the teachers are electrical engineers — or very mechanically inclined.

The equipment requires servicing.

White said the industry has faced up to this problem by establishing a nationwide network of specialized dealers who provide electronic and mechanical service.

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